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Fuentes Bill Stops Ineffective Employment Verification

SACRAMENTO– Assemblymember Felipe Fuentes (D- Sylmar) won approval in the State Assembly of a bill that would have the State of California opt out of using electronic verification or “E-Verify” and prohibit municipalities from prematurely mandating the system. The bill is now headed to the Senate.

E-Verify is a voluntary, internet-based program used by a growing number of employers nationwide to electronically verify their workers’ employment eligibility. The E-Verify system uses information in databases maintained by the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration. While the program is often portrayed as a “magic bullet” to curb the hiring of unauthorized workers, it has been plagued by many problems since its inception in 1997, including the fact that E-Verify relies on outdated databases. AB 2067 seeks to prohibit municipal employers from using the system and declare the intent of the Legislature to curtail the use of E-Verify while the system remains plagued with deficiencies.

“E-Verify relies on databases with an unacceptable error rate of 18 million inaccuracies, leaving U.S. citizens and authorized workers vulnerable to discrimination. Wide spread use of this system will have a devastating impact on California businesses and workers, creating workforce confusion, instability and economic harm to the state.” said Assemblymember Fuentes.

According to government sponsored commissions, it has been found that there is frequent misuse of E-Verify by employers who either use it in a discriminatory way or to take adverse actions against employees. “California’s employers should be discouraged from using this seriously flawed system,” Fuentes said. “E-Verify exposes public and private employees to discriminatory treatment and places a burden on employers.”

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